

Opening Remarks
Lieutenant Governor John Bohlinger
Montana Historic Preservation Awards Ceremony
January 19, 2011

Thank you for the invitation to be with you this afternoon, and the opportunity to recognize and honor those who have made the effort to preserve our history, a history that tells the story of the life and the values of those who once lived here, in our great state of Montana.

These cultural resources can be found in historic homes, places of worship, civic buildings, and on our main streets and trails, and yes in our homesteads.

What we are doing by identifying these properties is making an effort to ensure that these special places never pass into obscurity.

The historic architecture of our towns and country side represents art, art that is not relegated to a museum or private collection, that is not open to the public. These buildings and places represent art that is open to the public for all of us to experience.

Look no further than the building we are in today, the Myrna Loy Center. This building was built as a jail; it was intended to house criminals. Ironically, its design is one of beauty and refinement; intrinsically appealing because of its Romanesque architecturally designed style. Both then and now, this building represents a statement about the values of this community, and it's appreciation for design and style.

Of course, the structures and objects of many once thriving settlements have faded into history. In some cases, we can only understand them through archaeology.

Whether it be architecture or archaeology, Cultural resources hold a mirror to our world. To the romantic they give a sense of place, to the pragmatist a foundation for heritage tourism. For the young these links to the past can drive the imagination wild. To the old, they may stir memories.

There is no doubt what compels many of those we will recognize today. In reviewing our list of award recipients and their accomplishments, we are reminded of what preservation is. It is work, sometimes a life work. It is activism, winning the hearts and minds before that first hammer is swung. Often times, successful preservation call on ones creativity, ones patience and ones financial resources.

The question you have wrestled with and found an answer to is..."How can we make this old run down building relevant again?" I believe your success in giving new life to old buildings is found in your enduring optimism, your tireless effort and an unwillingness to give up on your vision.

Today we honor your dedication to preserve our history and to tell the story of our past.